

FAQ

THE PROPOSED 24TH STREET ON-RAMP ON EASTBOUND STATE ROUTE 16

Why did WSDOT prepare environmental documentation related to the proposed on ramp at 24th Street in Gig Harbor?

In accordance with federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and state Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) rules, a NEPA Re-Evaluation and SEPA Addendum was prepared to provide additional information related to the *SR 16/Union Avenue Vicinity to SR 302 Vicinity Final Environmental Impact Statement*, issued in January 2000.

What is the new on-ramp?

The proposed 24th Street eastbound on-ramp and associated improvements were not analyzed in the (final) January 2000 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the larger State Route 16 improvements project. After the approval of the EIS by the Federal Highway Administration and WSDOT, the on-ramp at 24th Street NW was proposed, along with an adjoining pedestrian and bicycle path, and a fourth lane referred to as the *add-lane*. The design elements for these additional improvements have been developed.

Where is the proposed new on-ramp?

The 24th Street eastbound on-ramp and the adjoining pedestrian and bicycle path would be located between the new eastbound toll plaza on SR 16 and the new bridge across the Tacoma Narrows. The fourth lane (add-lane) would extend from the east end of the 24th Street eastbound on-ramp across the new bridge and terminate at the South Jackson Avenue exit.

Why do we need the 24th Street eastbound on-ramp and related improvements?

The purpose of the proposed 24th Street eastbound on-ramp is to improve personal and freight mobility and improve safety and operational reliability within the project corridor. In addition, as the only fixed crossing of Puget Sound, the existing and future bridges serve a critical role in disaster response. Hence, the new bridge approach needs to be upgraded to meet earthquake standards and to maintain the highest functioning of the crossing should an earthquake take place.

How would the new proposed 24th Street eastbound on-ramp and associated improvements meet the current project's purpose and need?

The 24th Street eastbound on-ramp would provide an additional access to eastbound SR 16 for the residential community southwest of Gig Harbor.

Additional freeway access would improve mobility and reduce congestion on the local road network. Less congestion and greater mobility on city streets, ultimately, go to improve safety and reliability along the corridor.

Who will decide if the 24th Street eastbound on-ramp will be built?

Based on the environmental evaluation as well as engineering and cost considerations, WSDOT will determine whether the 24th Street eastbound on-ramp and associated improvements will be built.

Conclusion of environmental evaluation

The NEPA Re-Evaluation and SEPA Addendum conclude that the 24th Street eastbound on-ramp, the adjoining pedestrian and bicycle path, and the fourth lane (add-lane) on the new bridge would not result in new significant adverse environmental impacts. Therefore, a supplemental EIS is not required; the proposed project may be built if final engineering and cost considerations are met.